

Subcommittee on Federal Lands

Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memorandum

April 11, 2018

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Committee Staff— Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on **H.R. 3045 (Rep. Luke Messer)**, To amend the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and for other purposes.
April 11, 2018, 2:00 PM; 1324 Longworth House Office Building

H.R. 3045 “*Eastern Legacy Extension Act*”

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 3045 introduced by Representative Luke Messer (R-IN-06), amends the National Trails System Act to extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail to 4,900 miles, from the origin of the Ohio River in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the mouth of the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon.

Cosponsors

Rep. Susan W. Brooks [R-IN-05]

Witnesses

The Honorable Luke Messer
Member of Congress, Indiana 6th District

Ms. Lindy Hatcher
Executive Director
Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation
Great Falls, MT

Background

The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, established in 1978, commemorates the opening of the American West by the Corps of Discovery in the early 19th Century. In 1803 President Thomas Jefferson charged Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark with finding a water route to the Pacific Ocean across the United States’ newly purchased Louisiana Territory, and with seeking out and identifying wildlife, vegetation, and American Indian people along the way. The journey contributed to significant scientific knowledge and profound political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental changes to the lands and the peoples of

the North American continent. Today the trail provides visitors with connections to the historic event through recreational and educational opportunities.¹

The current 3,700-mile National Historic Trail follows the route of the Lewis and Clark Expedition west of the Mississippi River from Wood River, Illinois to Astoria, Oregon. The Eastern Legacy Extension recognizes the significance of the planning, preparation, and beginning stages of the Expedition. H.R. 3045 will extend the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail by 1,200 miles, with a new eastern boundary at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania following the path of the Ohio River.

The Eastern Legacy Extension of the trail encompasses important history and key moments for the Expedition: from the spot where Lewis and Clark joined together, to the location where Lewis purchased his keelboat and the site where the full Corps of Discovery was formed to the spot where the crew turned their boats upstream for the first time. After leaving Pittsburgh, the men initiated hands-on activities that prepared them for the hardships of the long trip west and assured that their technology and techniques would work correctly to support the exploration and documentation. While traveling the eastern portion of the route, Lewis and Clark gained a better understanding of the number of men needed for the Expedition, how to operate the new vessels, how to navigate the sandbars prevalent in the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, and refined their techniques to map, document, and investigate the surroundings.²

In February 2018, at the direction of Congress, the National Park Service completed a study on the proposed extension of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail (NHT) (Public Law 110-229, Section 343). The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Extension Study found the route proposed for inclusion in H.R. 3045 to be nationally significant and suitable and feasible for inclusion in the existing Lewis and Clark NHT. The study was conducted in accordance with the National Trails System Act (16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.). The study noted that there would be additional costs expected to be handled by the NPS and trail partners to manage the trail extension.³

The Eastern Legacy Extension is supported by the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation and the Lewis and Clark Trust, both partner organizations of the Lewis and Clark NHT. Several local organizations contacted the NPS during the public comment period for the study and expressed an interest in partnering in trail activities along the extended route.⁴

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

¹ “History & Culture”. Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail website.

<https://www.nps.gov/lecl/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

² National Park Service. (2018). Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Extension Study.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=155&projectID=32773&documentID=86024>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid. (page 53)

Administration Position

The Administration's position is currently unknown.

Effect on Current Law (Ramseyer)